

My name is Doug Kelley, and I live here.

It is my 68th birthday and I have chosen to spend it here with you, my friends and neighbors.

This date is significant to me not only as my natal day, but also because my parents - then Lieutenant Warren Kelley and Barbara Kelley - bought the old house on Pinelock Drive the day after, when I was two years old. As I have no memory of their previous duty stations, Pinelock and Gales Ferry remain my earliest recollections.

It would be easy to describe those early years as idyllic - growing up on the banks of Long Cove - and freely wandering the woods and skating on the ice. I remember too, though, the Cold War duck and cover drills at the old Gales Ferry Elementary School, and the day the USS Thresher went down, taking with her the fathers of some of my second grade classmates. My mother too was lost that same year, and she is at rest in the Gales Ferry Cemetery.

While she did not know it, her own ancestor settled just upriver in the 1640s at a place which used to be part of Ledyard known as Brewster's Neck. My great-grandson is now the 15th generation of his family to live in Gales Ferry.

"What does all this ancient history have to do with this matter," you may ask.

I believe all these people who came before us had the same basic desires as we do today - to live in peace with their neighbors; to make an honest living; and together to build a thriving community where the blessings of Liberty could be enjoyed by all, and not only the few.

What I believe the application before you - as representatives of this community- will do would be to destroy this community, through all the many ways which others here have described. We are not "fearful" as some have labeled us. We ARE mindful of the mistakes of the past and of the time, effort, and treasure which has been needed to correct those mistakes. We enjoy the clearer air, swimming in the cleaner water, and being protected by thoughtful regulation from intrusion and danger in our homes and streets. We do not want to go back. All of history is NOT good, but if we are wise, we may take lessons from even the worst of it, and be determined to do and be better.

Please help us - your friends and neighbors - to be better. Please deny this application - this plan which is so basely offensive to so many of us - and allow us to continue to live in the peace which we have treasured for so long.

Thank you.
Douglas B. Kelley
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Gales Ferry